

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE 13 MOST COMMON KITEMARES....PG.74

The Kiteboarder

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magazine

ADVENTURE TO

*Martha's
Vineyard*

PG40



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The Vineyard

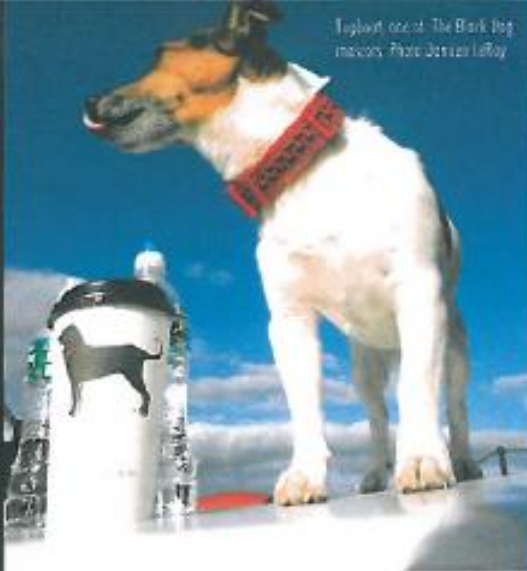
By Melissa Gil

The *Alabama*, built in Pensacola, Florida, in 1926 and restored by The Black Dog crew, offers passengers the once-in-a-lifetime experience of cruising New England's beautiful coastal waters as it was done centuries ago. Photo: Rob Douglas.

Haven for the Rich and Famous



Known better as the home of high profile movie stars, politicians, writers and artists than as a kiteboarding destination, the original Wampanoag Indian name given to Martha's Vineyard was *Noepe*, which means "dry land amid waters." Martha's Vineyard is the largest island off the southeastern coast of Massachusetts measuring twenty miles long and nine miles wide. Accessible only by air or ferry, the "Vineyard" is also home to The Black Dog Tavern Company, clothing sponsor of Cabrinha pro rider Damien LeRoy.



The Beginning of a Great Week

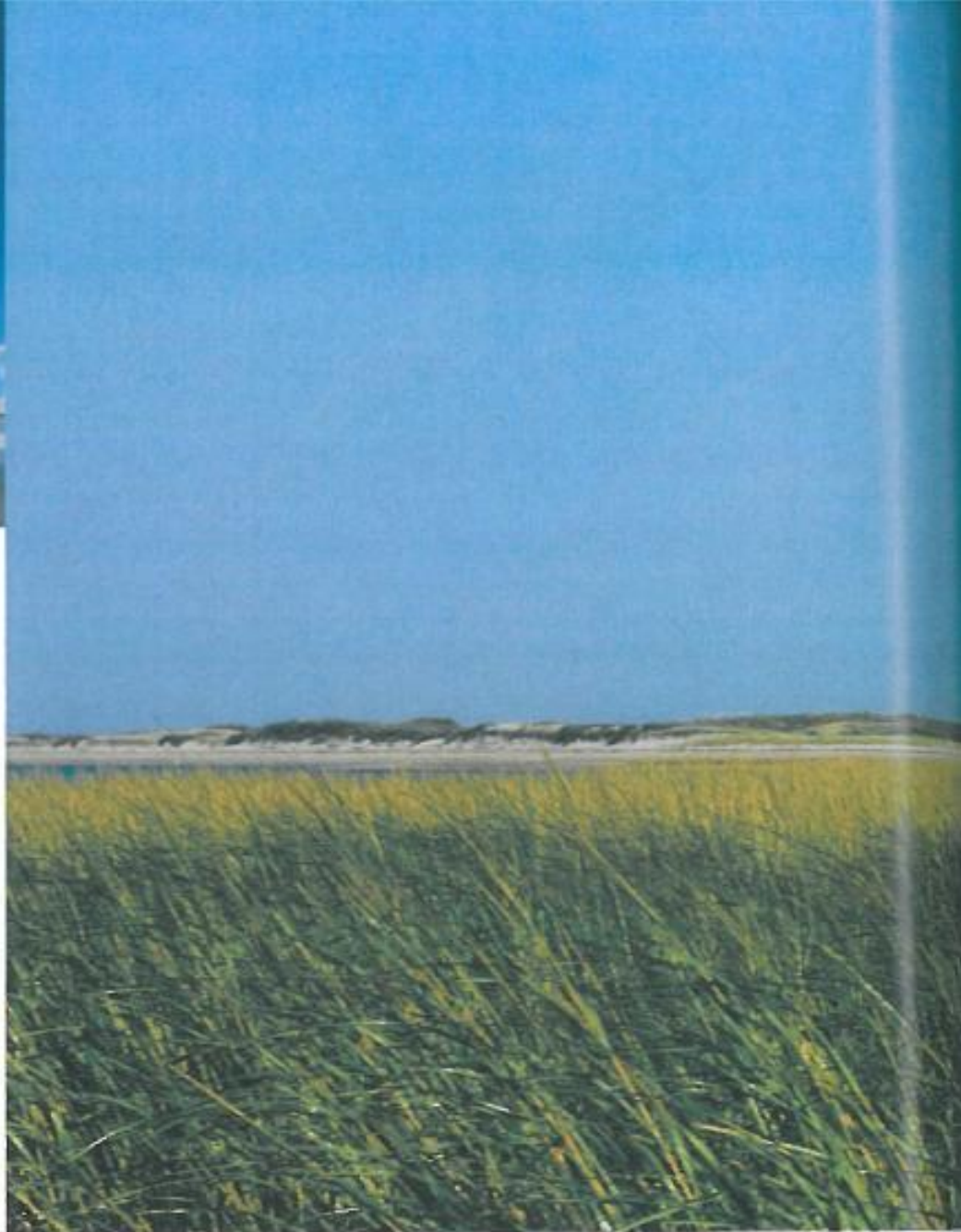
Damien and I traveled to Martha's Vineyard this last September to meet up with The Black Dog crew to discover the many great riding spots of this largely untapped kiteboarding Mecca. We landed at the Martha's Vineyard Airport (MVY) on a Monday and drove a short distance to Vineyard Haven, a beautiful and pleasant ocean side town on the north side of the island. We were just in time for an extraordinary dinner with the entire Douglas family, owners of the world famous Black Dog tail ships, tavern, general stores and bakeries, named after Captain Robert Douglas's faithful four-legged companion, "Black Dog."

Dinner guests also included the 2007 Alaskan Iditarod champion, Lance Mackey. For those of you that don't know what the Iditarod is, it is the most prestigious and intense dog sled race in the world. The race covers over 1,150 miles across Alaskan mountain ranges, forests, frozen rivers, desolate tundra and windswept earth. Lance Mackey and his team of 14 dogs won the 2007 Iditarod, and to those competitors he left behind Lance became known as "the ghost" of the Iditarod. That night at the Tavern, Lance recounted incredible stories of his adventures which was the perfect prelude to our week-long riding adventure.

That evening, the wind screeched from the southwest all night and the coastal waters forecast was predicting a solid 20-30 knots for the next few days. "It's go time donkeys!" became our wake up call from our host and guide Rob Douglas. This is how we were introduced to the Black Dog stoke and welcomed to Massachusetts, where in the words of Rob, they do nothing but eat, sleep, chew tobacco, read books, surf, build boats, bird watch, fish and kite!

Cape Pogue, Chappaquiddick Island

Tuesday we woke up at 6 am, picked up some "Javas" at the Black Dog Bakery and loaded the boat at The Black Dog Wharf. The majority of riding spots on Martha's are accessible by car, but we chose to explore by boat as it's a bit easier and quicker — and a lot more fun too! We made our way out the Vineyard Sound Harbor and headed southeast towards a



beautiful flat-water spot, Cape Pogue Bay, at the northern tip of Chappaquiddick Island. We cruised aboard the Black Dog high speed transport BDV, powered by twin 225 hp four stroke outboards sucking down 20 gallons per hour. If you want to spend 80 bucks on fuel every 60 minutes, you too can rent a boat at Island Water Sports and cruise to any spot on the Island as well!

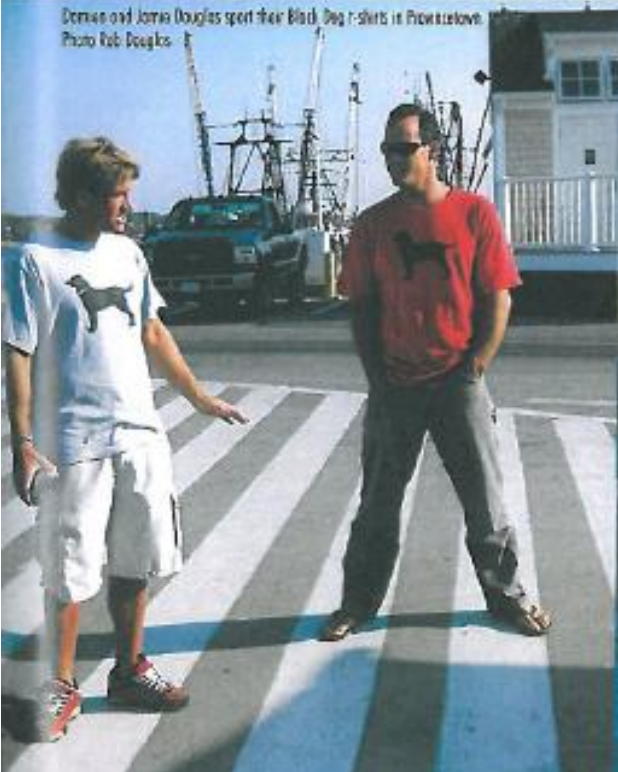
We entered the bay through a narrow deep water channel and anchored on the inside. The bay is surrounded by a strip of sand making it ideal for kiting and good for any level of kiteboarder, since it is a very open beach with an easy and safe launch and land area. The weather was perfect; sunny blue skies with wind blowing 25-30 knots from the southwest, offshore and steady. The first one out on the water was Rob, aka "Blue Leader." It seems he cannot ride enough and impressed everyone when he landed his first S-bend and kitemoop to blind, both with a handle pass. His brother, Jaime, didn't hold back one bit

either and went for super committed kitemoops. "Lil' Dog" Damien, bobbed off the beach with a dead man, having fun displaying a little old school style. We rode all day on 7 and 9 meter kites, going big and riding overpowered on the flat water.

The next day the temperature was a chilly 66 degrees. Bundled up in heavyweight hooded sweats and windbreakers, we got ready for more action and headed out once again in the early morning to Cape Pogue on the Black Dog boat. The conditions were sick; bright sun with northerly winds around 30 mph. This time, we anchored one mile north near the northern tip of the bay. Damien went out and showed off all his powered handle pass tricks and massive kitemoops. Later on during the day, Rob, eager to duplicate Damien's moves went huge and "Ranger Rick," a 60-year old member of The Black Dog entourage, was perfecting his back loops while Damien shot photos of the crew.



Dennis and James Douglas sport their Black Dog t-shirts in Provincetown. Photo: Rob Douglas



Rob burns a turn in the flat water of Cape Poge. Photo: Damien LeRay





Provincetown

On Thursday, we were out of bed at 5:30 am and on the 6 am ferry from Vineyard Haven to Woods Hole in mainland Massachusetts. From Woods Hole, we drove two hours to the northeast tip of Cape Cod to a place called Provincetown. One of the first kiteboarders to ride this spot, Brandon Clifford, met up with us at MacMillan Pier. Brandon and his father are treasure hunters in the area and are currently salvaging items from an 18th century wreck named the "Wydah." The *Wydah*, a 300-ton slave ship, was lost off the coast of Wellfleet in 1717. Pirate Captain "Black" Samuel Bellamy and all hands went down with the ship during a violent nor'east blow.

We hopped on a utility salvage boat to take us to the riding site and were not disappointed. The place was gorgeous. A rock jetty went across the entire bay and sand dunes rolled their way to a lighthouse on the point. We rode 10 and 12 meter kites early and as the wind picked up, we switched to 7s and 9s. The side-off wind provided us with the smoothest conditions; so smooth you could have buttered your grandmother's old frying pans. There is no question this spot is for any level of kiter, but due to the 14-foot tidal range, boating experience is helpful. As the tide receded, an amazing collection of sandbanks, beds of eelgrass, and shipwrecks became exposed. Rob carved in and out of ponds with huge sprays and Jamie elevated over a partially exposed fish boat wreck. Damien touched down on the back of the salvage boat, using some steel towline guides as a slider. We rode until the sun went down in the west and a beautiful full harvest moon came up in the Atlantic's eastern sky. That night we slept aboard the Clifford's 75' *Vast Explorer*, a converted Canadian naval patrol boat.

Sengenkontacket Pond and State Beach Park

It was another early morning wakeup, powered by coffee and chewing tobacco as we began our trek back to Woods Hole to take the ferry back to Vineyard Haven at 6:45 am. We then drove on to Beach Road from Vineyard Haven to Sengenkontacket Pond, which is about 10 minutes from town. State Beach Park is between the Vineyard villages of Oak Bluffs and Edgartown. The cool thing about this spot is you can ride any direction of wind, and you can choose between riding the pond or Nantucket Sound. This is the ideal spot to kite if you ever make it up to the Vineyard because it is so close to town and easily accessible. Still firing, the wind was about 15 to 20 knots, side-onshore from the south. Damien went off going for his powered handle passes to blind, Rob and I worked on our S-bend to blind and kitemoops while Jamie worked on his jumps. Fatigue was setting in from the early wake up calls and long days of riding. By the end of the day, I was ready for some much needed rest and relaxation.



Melissa was glad for a day off after six days of solid riding. Photo: Damien Kelley

Sailing the Alabama

That afternoon we drove back to Vineyard Haven and went sailing in New England's beautiful coastal waters aboard the schooner *Alabama* with Captain Morgan Douglas. The *Alabama* is a 90' foot Gaff Rigged Fore and Aft Schooner. We watched a beautiful sunset as we experienced true sailing, powered by the 5000 square feet of sail of this magnificent wooden sailboat. When we awoke the next morning, the wind had finally stopped. After riding all day for six days straight averaging only five to six hours a night of sleep instead of my normal nine to ten, my body was falling apart. Of course the boys weren't even tired yet and they were on a roll to continue the adventure. Nonetheless, the tranquility of a windless day was welcomed.

Farewell to Martha's Vineyard

When the time came to say our goodbyes, we couldn't help but feel nostalgic. We had just spent an epic week riding with a super cool family and group of kiteboarders who took us into their homes and shared colorful tales of their family's and island's rich history with us. The Black Dog boys' stories of wide open riding spots and perfect conditions were more than just imaginary tales from the Cape. We kited unbelievably beautiful and pristine spots and gained a new respect for the variety of conditions the Cape has to offer.

Martha's Vineyard is one of those spots that you hear about, but never really pay much attention to. The next time someone talks about epic kiteboarding in Massachusetts, don't overlook the potential of Cape Cod or Martha's Vineyard. Its beaches vary from protected shallow, clear-water stretches on the northern and eastern sides to expanses of killer surf and point breaks along the south side. Kiteboarders of all levels will enjoy the variety of riding conditions, rich history, and natural beauty of this area where time almost stands still and the pace is a far cry from the normal hustle and bustle of our daily lives.

FACTFILE

TRANSPORTATION

Air: Direct flights to The Vineyard (MYV) are available via Cape Cod Air and JetBlue from Boston, Hyannis, New Bedford and Providence (RI). You can also take the ferry from New Bedford, Falmouth or Hyannis. www.steamshipauthority.com

SEASON

Best riding months are April 15 through November 30 with water temps ranging from 50° to 70°. No booties are needed but bring your shorts and steamer.

LODGING

(BUDGET) HOSTELS: Star of the Sea dorm beds from \$22/night; The Vineyard Hostel private rooms from \$75/night www.usahostels.org/cape/index.shtml **CAMPGROUND:** from \$46/night or \$295/week www.campnav.com

(MODERATE) Harbor Landing from \$130/night www.harborlanding.com; MV Seaside Hotel, pet friendly, from \$140/night www.mvseaside.com **(LUXURY)** Charlotte Inn, exceptional 18th century hotel, from \$295/night www.renaissancev.com For more properties, see www.mvnl.com or www.visitptown.com

FOOD/NIGHTLIFE

The Black Dog Tavern, Cafe of Bakery of course! Everything made from scratch! www.theblackdog.com; Outerland is The Vineyard's largest nightclub and has a great bistro www.outlandnav.com; Season's Eatery and Pub is the local sports bar www.seasonspub.com

OTHER ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES

The Black Dog historical Tall Ships, tours, day sails, charters www.theblackdogtallships.com; Island Water Sports boat rentals www.boatinv.com

SHOPS/SCHOOLS

Corner Five kite and surf shop (Martha's) www.cornerfive.com; Cape Cod Kite School www.capecodkiteschool.com; Little Overhead (Cape Cod) www.littleoverhead.com; Leading Edge Kite School (Boston) www.kiteboston.com; Fun Seekers (Cape Cod) www.funseekers.org; Skyhigh Kiteboarding School (Martha's) www.skyhighkite.com; Sky Kiteboarding School (Nantucket) www.kitesurfingschool.com; Powerline Sports (Salisbury) www.powerlinesports.com